

VZCZCXRO0851
RR RUEHPA
DE RUEHOU #0547/01 1750943
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 230943Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3844
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USUN NEW YORK
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 0009
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0150
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0021
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OUAGADOUGOU 000547

AF/W FOR EPLUMB, JHUTCHISON
NSC FOR KAREN O'DONNELL

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 6/9/2023

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [UNSC](#) [UV](#) [LY](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: Burkina Faso President Compaore's Relations With Libya's
Quaddafi Increasingly Strained

OUAGADOUGO 00000547 001.2 OF 002

Classified by Amb. Jeanine Jackson; reasons 1.4(b,d)

Reftels: A) Ouagadougou 000519 B) Ouagadougou 000432

¶1. (U) Summary. The once strong relations between President Blaise Compaore and Muammar Quaddafi have deteriorated recently. President Compaore's trip to Israel, his lack of support for Quaddafi's vision of a "United States of Africa" and of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, and his comments on Quaddafi's lack of respect for his peers have demonstrated his desire to distance himself from Quaddafi. Compaore has been emboldened by the international community's recognition of Burkina Faso's leadership role in Africa. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a meeting with President Compaore on June 13 to discuss Burkina Faso's continued support for the U.S. position on Zimbabwe (Ref A), Ambassador asked Compaore whether he intended to participate in the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (Cen-Sad) Summit in Cotonou. He replied that he would attend briefly but only because he wanted to demonstrate support for Benin's President, Yayi Boni. He said that he saw no utility in the meeting, and did not believe that it would result in tangible outcomes.

¶3. (C) During the meeting, Compaore seemed anxious to discuss his relationship with "the Guide," Muammar Quaddafi. He said there were certainly "misunderstandings" since Compaore's visit to Israel for the anniversary celebrations (Ref B). Quaddafi had "bluntly disapproved" of the visit, and had threatened to no longer visit Burkina Faso or invite Compaore to visit Libya. Compaore laughed, saying that he had ignored the threat and gone to Israel anyway. He also mentioned that the Togo President Faure Gnassingbe had consulted with him on whether to go to Israel as he had received the same threat from Quaddafi; Compaore had advised him that "you are a young guy, don't go, I will go as the more established leader in the region" and represent ECOWAS. (Note and Comment: Gnassingbe did not go to Israel, but instead sent a Minister to represent him. Burkina Faso Foreign Minister Djibril Bassole visited Tripoli June 8, on his way to Europe and the U.S., in part to mend fences. End Note and Comment.)

¶4. (C) Ambassador asked President Compaore whether he had met Quaddafi's son Saif. Compaore replied that he had met him on several occasions, and described Saif as "more trustworthy than his dad." Saif recently proposed to Compaore a number of well thought out and well presented projects for Burkina Faso, and then asked Compaore to try to convince his father to agree to the projects. President

Compaore also told Ambassador that he believes Quaddafi should talk to Israel because dialogue is the best solution. He surmised that there would be serious problems in Quaddafi's family after his death related to "succession" - i.e., the fact that Quaddafi has had two wives and eight children. Saif, who is the most interested and competent in economic and political affairs, is the son of second wife and far down the chain of "succession."

¶15. (U) President Compaore attended Cen-Sad, spending over 24 hours in Cotonou, but he intentionally did not attend the official reception in honor of the summit participants. According to press reports in Ouagadougou, President Quaddafi called for the dismantling of most African regional organizations, in favor of the Libya-funded and controlled Cen-Sad, arguing that the other organizations had failed. He called on all those who would like to benefit from his investments and financing to join the Cen-Sad. He added that those who oppose his African government projects are "ignorant and traitors" who "work for western nations."

¶15. (U) The local press described Quaddafi's pronouncements as being "disrespectful" of his peers, and that he is "treating (us) like children." Compaore was particularly annoyed, according to some reports, that Quaddafi attacked regional organizations.

¶16. (U) Comment: During the ECOWAS Heads of State Summit in January 2008 in Ouagadougou, President Quaddafi tried to garner support for his Africa government concept. At that time, President Compaore went along with the idea in principle, but with several stated preconditions: 1) the establishment of the institution must be preceded by a process and a number of steps that would facilitate integration, including the free movement of people and goods; 2) African leaders need to ensure that their citizens support such an organization. However, Compaore is now among those African leaders who have recently expressed opposition to the establishment of United

OUAGADOUGO 00000547 002.2 OF 002

States of Africa, arguing that it is unrealistic and that focus should be on regional organizations and integration instead.

¶17. (U) The dismissal of Compaore's long-time confidant and Agriculture Minister, Salif Diallo, who also served as a bridge between the Compaore government and Libya, has also contributed to deteriorating relations.

Jackson